

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 0170

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FOR DALE GOOD, S/IL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB PINT
SUBJECT: ICFTU DEVELOPMENTS

REF: EC BRUSSELS 0162

1. JOHN VANDERVEKEN, ICFTU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY, THINKS THAT THE CIRCULAR LETTER QUOTED IN REFTEL WAS A "LITTLE STRONGER" THAN THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD RESOLUTION IT PURPORTED TO SUMMARIZE. HE TOLD USEC LABOR ATTACHE JANUARY 7 THAT THE LETTER'S ANALYSIS OF THE RESOLUTION MIGHT WELL BE CHALLENGED BY LEFT WINGERS ON THE BOARD, BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION.

2. VANDERVEKEN SAID IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO TAKE THE NEGATIVE ACTION OF KEEPING CONTACTS WITH THE WFTU AND ITS AGENTS TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. HE SAID HE HAS PERSUADED GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN THAT THE TIME IS RIPE TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION TO PROTEST THE LACK OF TRADE UNION FREEDOM IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 EC BRU 00170 071857Z

COUNTRIES.

3. IN VANDERVEKEN'S VIEW, THE ICFTU FUMBLING BADLY IN NOT FILING CHARGES AT THE ILO AGAINST POLAND FOR JAILING STRIKERS LAST SUMMER. JUST WHAT THE ICFTU WILL DO IS NOT CLEAR, BUT A MEETING OF THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

LATER THIS YEAR IS BEING CONSIDERED AS A FORUM.

4. PREVIOUSLY, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, VANDERVEKEN HAS EXPRESSED TO US HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH A SITUATION WHEREIN "THE ONLY COUNTRIES IT IS SAFE TO CRITICIZE ARE SOUTH AFRICA AND CHILE." THE SECRETARIAT SENSES THAT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IS READY TO ACCEPT A MORE EVEN-HANDED APPROACH, ONE THAT INCLUDES EASTERN EUROPE.

5. BESIDES, ACCORDING TO VANDERVEKEN, THE WFTU IS PRESSING CHARGES IN GENEVA AGAINST SEVERAL WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOR VIOLATION OF ILO STANDARDS IN ALLEGEDLY FOLLOWING A PRACTICE OF SCREENING OUT "SUBSERVIVE" CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH AGENCIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES.

6. ANOTHER OF THE ICFTU'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS, ACCORDING TO VANDERVEKEN, IS TO WORK MORE CLOSELY WITH THE OECD'S TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE. THE ICFTU HAS ALLOWED ITS INTEREST IN TUAC TO DRIFT, HE SAID, BUT WITH THE AFL-CIO NOW A MEMBER, THE ICFTU SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE.

7. AS FOR HIMSELF, VANDERVEKEN WILL BE STICKING CLOSE TO THE ICFTU HEADQUARTERS DURING THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF 1977, SINCE KERSTEN WILL BE ON THE ROAD A LOT AS USUAL. KERSTEN WILL ATTEND, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 EC BRU 00170 071857Z

FOR EXAMPLE, AN ICFTU-SPONSORED MEETING OF 25 TOP-LEVEL AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS IN NAIROBI JANUARY 27, VARIOUS MEETINGS OF THE ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN SINGAPORE BETWEEN FEB. 9 AND 16, AND A CONGRESS OF THE UGTT IN TUNIS MARCH 23. HINTON

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